AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-44. (cancelled)

45. (currently amended) A machine-implemented method, comprising the steps of:

receiving one or more requests from a service requestor that is using ~~an Internet Protocol (IP)~~ a network address to address the one or more requests to a service provided by a first node within a cluster, wherein said first node is configured to provide said service to requests addressed to said [[IP]] network address;

in response to said first node becoming unavailable, automatically configuring a second node of the cluster to respond to requests addressed to said [[IP]] network address;

after said first node becomes unavailable, receiving a request from the service requestor that is using said [[IP]] network address to address a message to said cluster related to said service; and

in response to said message, said second node of the cluster sending a response that indicates an error condition.

46. (currently amended) The method of Claim 45, further comprising the steps of:

upon receiving said response, the service requestor identifying a second [[IP]] network address to access said service; and

the service requestor using said second [[IP]] network address to address a second message to said cluster related to said service.

47. (previously presented) The method of Claim 45, further comprising the step of:

storing, at the first node, information identifying one or more nodes of the cluster as being standby nodes, wherein each of the one or more standby nodes is configured to provide the service in response to being instructed to provide the service if the first node becomes unavailable.

48. (previously presented) The method of Claim 45, further comprising the step of:

in response to said first node becoming unavailable, determining if said first node is configured to allow the service to be provided by another node of the cluster.

49. (previously presented) The method of Claim 48, further comprising the step of:

in response to determining said first node is configured to allow the service to be provided by another node of the cluster, determining a standby node of the cluster to perform the service; and

instructing the standby node to perform the service.

50. (previously presented) The method of Claim 45, further comprising the steps of:

in response to said first node becoming unavailable, instructing a standby node of the cluster to perform the service;

determining whether another node of the cluster is capable of providing the plurality of services provided by the standby node; and

if another node of the cluster is not capable of providing the plurality of services provided by the standby node, then configuring the standby node to disallow the plurality of services to be provided by another node of the cluster.

51. (previously presented) The method of Claim 50, further comprising the step of:

in response to configuring the standby node to disallow the plurality of services to be provided by another node of the cluster, issuing an alert to a user.

52. (previously presented) The method of Claim 45, wherein said first node comprises a monitor process, and wherein said monitor process is configured to detect if said first node becoming unavailable.

53. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, wherein execution of the one or more sequences of instructions by one or more processors causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

receiving one or more requests from a service requestor that is using ~~an Internet Protocol (IP)~~ a network address to address the one or more requests to a service provided by a first node within a cluster, wherein said first node is configured to provide said service to requests addressed to said [[IP]] network address;

in response to said first node becoming unavailable, automatically configuring a second node of the cluster to respond to requests addressed to said [[IP]] network address;

after said first node becomes unavailable, receiving a request from the service requestor that is using said [[IP]] network address to address a message to said cluster related to said service; and

in response to said message, said second node of the cluster sending a response that indicates an error condition.

54. (currently amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 53, wherein execution of the one or more sequences of instructions by the one or more processors causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

upon receiving said response, the service requestor identifying a second [[IP]] network address to access said service; and

the service requestor using said second [[IP]] network address to address a second message to said cluster related to said service.

55. (previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 53, wherein execution of the one or more sequences of instructions by the one or more processors causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

storing, at the first node, information identifying one or more nodes of the cluster as being standby nodes, wherein each of the one or more standby nodes is configured to provide the service in response to being instructed to provide the service if the first node becomes unavailable.

56. (previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 53, wherein execution of the one or more sequences of instructions by the one or more processors causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

in response to said first node becoming unavailable, determining if said first node is configured to allow the service to be provided by another node of the cluster.

57. (previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 56, wherein execution of the one or more sequences of instructions by the one or more processors causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

in response to determining said first node is configured to allow the service to be provided by another node of the cluster, determining a standby node of the cluster to perform the service; and

instructing the standby node to perform the service.

58. (previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 53, wherein execution of the one or more sequences of instructions by the one or more processors causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

in response to said first node becoming unavailable, instructing a standby node of the cluster to perform the service;

determining whether another node of the cluster is capable of providing the plurality of services provided by the standby node; and

if another node of the cluster is not capable of providing the plurality of services provided by the standby node, then configuring the standby node to disallow the plurality of services to be provided by another node of the cluster.

59. (previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 58, wherein execution of the one or more sequences of instructions by the one or more processors causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

in response to configuring the standby node to disallow the plurality of services to be provided by another node of the cluster, issuing an alert to a user.

60. (previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 53, wherein said first node comprises a monitor process, and wherein said monitor process is configured to detect if said first node becoming unavailable.